

THE  
**PICTVRE**  
 OF  
**INDEPENDENCY**

*Lively (yet Lovingly) Delineated.*

PRO. 27. 6. *Faithfull are the wounds of a Friend; but the  
 Kisses of an Enemy are deceitfull: therefore,*  
 PRO. 9. 8. *Rebuke a wise man and he will love thee; but reprove  
 a Scornor, and he will hate thee.*



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## The Picture of I N D E P E N D E N C Y, Lively (yet lovingly) Delineated.



He most unhappy jars and intestine divisions between our most unkinde and unadvised *Independent Brethren* and the *Presbyterian party*, especially in matters of *Church-government*, having proved such a sad and sore *Remora* and retardation to the most blessed and glorious work of *Reformation*, at this time, in the Church of God, so long and so longingly desired by us all, and (at the first) so smoothly and sweetly begun among us, have filled my soule (and many thousands more) with many and most various both sad and serious thoughts and conjectures, both concerning the *rice* and *root* thereof, the present *growth* and *increase* of them, and the *future fear* and *danger* thereof: even no lesse then a miserable and confused *Anarchy*, if not seriously seen into, and seasonably prevented, either by a holy and humble *reconciliation* in them, or by a just *necessitated restriction* by authority. Now, I considered with my selfe, that for me to perplex my thoughts about the *Dogmaticall discussion* of the *Controversie* it self, would be as *endlesse* as it hath been *fruitlesse*, in respect of its *proper end*, yet I know much good and satisfactory *settlement* in the *Truth* hath come by the labours *that way* taken: But, I conceived it, a yet more *near* and as *sure* a way of *satisfaction*, seriously and sincerely to look into the *practicall-manner* of managing the *matter* in *controversie* on our *Dissenting-Brethrens* part. And truly, me thought (and that, upon apparent and indubitable grounds, as, by and by, I shall, I hope, make manifest) that *that* of divinely inspired and most wise King Solomon, Prov. 13. 10. seasonably and suitably offered it self unto me, as a *main*, if not *sole* and *certain rice* and *ground* of all the unchristianly and unbrotherly broyles and breaches, in this kinde among us, *viz.* that, *Only by Pride comes Contention*. This being, then, the undoubted *spurious Spring* of our *sad* and *bad* divisions,

I could not, but *instantly and easily* apprehend *Self* to be one most strong *streame* and turbulent *torrent* issuing out of that foul *fountain*. Which, that it most clearly appears *so* in generall, we have here a *sure word of Truth* for it : And that it is *so* in this particular, and present speciall case, what man, though but meerly rational, can deny, that rightly and impartially discerns any thing at all in the *mannaging* of the matter by our *Independent or Dissenting Brethren* against their *Presbyterian Brethren* ? For if it be not *Spiritual-pride*, and *Self-seeking*, that lead them on in their strange *New-way* (but, that they, with us, clearly *intend*, as they seem seriously to *pretend*, the *glory of God* in his own pure worship, and that *King Jesus alone* may rule his Church and childrens consciences according to his written Word) why, then, strive they so strenuously for *such a way of worship and government*, which they are not able to demonstrate & make clear from the written Word unto their *Presbyterian-Brethren* ? Now, if they are not able (as they have oft and earnestly been moved and mildly intreated thereunto) positively and plainly to set down unto us such an *exact way of worship and Gubernation of Gods Church* as may not, without *sinne*, be altered in the *least circumstantiall* particle thereof, to the end of the world ; why rest they not content (with us) with so much *materiality of worship and government* as is set forth plainly & clearly in the Word, and with godly moderation, piety, and prudence, humbly refer the rest (in *meer circumstantialls*) to Christian godly *Governours and Magistrates*, assisted with an *Assembly* of most learned and pious *Pastours and Teachers* (no whit inferiour, for *parts* and *piety* to the *best of theirs*) and both these regulated and directed by the right rule of *Gods Word*, as near as possibly (in the integrity of their soules) they are able ; herein, also, seeking assistance from *Gods holy and un-erring Spirit*, by much *fasting and prayer*, which, I think, they dare not deny to be *Gods way*. Why, I say, must this most considerable and most Noble Body of *Bereans* be rather regulated and circumscribed to the *unwritten New-lights* and strange *Enthusiasmes* of our *Dissenting Brethren*, they being also a most *inconsiderable and inferiour part* (therefore) of the *Body* ? Is there any reason, much less religion for it ? And if not, what then, means all this most unkinde and unbrotherly *writing and wrangling* against your *Presbyterian Brethren*, whom it highly concernes to contend earnestly to maintain the *faith*, and those *truths of God* (*Jude, v. 3.*) delivered to them, and (as

consonant

consonant to Gods Word and Scripturall Truth) practised by all the Saints in all the Reformed Churches of Christendome, yea and honoured by the speciall blessing of God himselfe on their way godly Church-government, as hath been all along (for these many years) most visible in those many thousands of most precious Christians and venerable Saints, brought forth and bred up in the Presbyterian-way, as Gods way, and, so highly honoured by himselfe, as is aforesaid. These, I say, are those that are most fit, yea, that are most deeply bound in conscience, earnestly to contend for their so sound and ancient doctrine and discipline; not you of the Independent-way, for your meer imaginary opinions and barely conceived new-notions, who have been desired againe and againe to manifest unto us out of Gods Word, or from the constant practise of any settled Church in all Europe, what it is ye would have, and what it is ye hold, as a certaine, fixed, and unalterable rule of Gods Worship and Church Govern-ment, but to this very day have not ingenuously declared it, or dealt plainly with us therein; wittenesse even that so highly cryed up Apologeticall Narration attested by five of your most Eminent Pillars of Independency, made-up, mainly, of many, indeed, fair pretences; as, of a strange and almost ridiculous voluntary-banishment; self-praisings of your own parts and piety; complainings, (but, most untruly) how ye have been slighted and contemned among us; whereas, ye have been equally embraced and honoured divers wayes, both by the Parliament, Assembly, and City of London, with the best of our Presbyterians; boasting how ye have been approved and entertained in your Church-way, in Holland, &c. Whereas both the Reformed Church in Holland and France also have assured us by the testimony of divers of their most pious and eminent Divines, the clean contrary, and that they have rejected your way, as very dangerous and destructive to the Church of God, and vilifying and undervaluing all the Reformed Churches, in comparifon of yours; and (to come to the point) pleading a mentall reservation in the main matter of our desire untill it come to a dead-lift, or a hard pinch: you laying down this irreligious Paradox for a principle (which ye make open and constant profession of, and wish to be enacted, as the most sacred law of all others, in the midst of all other Ecclesiasticall Lawes and Canons in Christian states throughout the world) Not to make your present judgement and practise, a binding law unto your selves for the future; out of a jealousie of your own frailty,

The Apologeti-  
call Narration  
described

Note the  
Independence  
Paradox

keeping this Reserve, to alter and retract what ever should be discovered to be taken up by you out of a misunderstanding of the rule. This being the avowed profession of your five grand-Apologists, to the whole world, in print: yet, a principle so inconsistent with sound faith and truth of Religion (of which, you so much vaunt) as that it suits with none but such an one whom the Apostle (*James* 1.6,7,8.) long since, ye know reprehended and characterized, (the true character, indeed, me thinks, of our *Independents Brethren*) viz. *A double minded man, unstable in all his ways, wavering, like a wave of the sea, driven about with the winde, and tossed.* Which, he closeth up with this dreadfull determination. *Let not that man think he shall receive any thing of the Lord. And if such Scepticks* (as you professe your selves by this Apostles determination) cannot so much as think to receive any thing of the Lord; with what faces and consciences can ye think to obtrude your *Independents-Wayes* and *fancies* upon us, as the infallable *Oracles*, nay, *Scepter*, and *Government* of God and Christ, which your selves, infallibly believe not to be such, and take up only for the present, with a *Reserve* of altering, and not binding your very selves thereto, for the future? For Gods sake, my *Brethren*, take heed what ye do herein: For does not the Apostle, *2 Tim.* 3.1,2.) prophesie, *That in the last dayes, perilous times shall come; for men shall be lovers of themselves, covetous, boasters, proud, heady, high-minded, having a forme of godlinesse, but denying the power thereof. Ever learning, but never able to come to the knowledge of the Truth.* Yea such as will not endure sound doctrine, but after their own lusts will heape to themselves teachers, having itching eares, turning away their eares from the truth, and will be turned unto fables and fictions, new-lights and revelations. And are not your *thm* pretended *New-lights*, the very persons, thus, delineated, by your own confessions and practises too, even Murmurers, Complainers, desirous to walk after your own lusts, and having mens persons in admiration for advantage. Yea, take heed (I say) ye be not found to be those *Clouds without water* carried about with Windes, and those *Wandering-Stars* which the Apostle *Jude* speaks of, which know not When or Where, immutably, to fix your faith and judgements? Whereas, our *Presbyterians*, and all other true Believers are alwayes (*1 Cor.* 15.58. *Phil.* 1.27. & *Chap.* 4.1, &c.) *Stedfast, unmoveable, standing fast in the Lord, in one spirit and in one minde, striving together for the faith of the Gospell, and not sof-*

sed to and fro, like children, carried about with every winde of doctrine, by the slight of men, as too many Scepticall-Independents are, to the great obloquie and scandall of Religion. O my Brethren, I have therefore great cause to fear you will hardly prove Martyrs for that Church-way or Discipline, for the future, to which you will not peremptorily so much as binde your judgement; no, though but only for the present.

Now, if all this aforesaid, arise not (as wise King Solomon sayes) from Spirituall Pride and self-seeking, what means (I say) all this fruitlesse writing and wrangling (if not fustlesse thrusting with, and) against the unquestionable heaven-honoured Truths of the Presbyterian-way, never to be refused (though much quarrelled at) by all the New-Speculations of our most unkinde Dissenting brethren. As namely, your most unjust and injurious quarrellings, and (I fear) malicious prejudicacies against reverend Master Edwards his pious, painfull, and learned Preaching and Writing against your Novell-Wayes, especially your quarrelling against his most learned Antapologia, not hitherto answered (as, indeed, unanswerable) by the best of you all. How also have the elaborate labours of Reverend Master Herl, learned Doctor Stuart, religious and learned Master Rutherford, and divers other Eminent Divines, been slighted, traduced, and abused by you, who have most copiously and conscienciously confirmed (by invincible arguments, Scripture, and reason) their Presbyterian, and most abundantly and clearly confuted your Independent-way? And (though in the last, yet not in the least place) how have ye most ungodlily, and ungratefully traduced and palpably abused pious and most precious Master Pryne, who (as I had a late former occasion to make like-worthy and honourable mention of him, in my Letter to Mr J. Goodwin) for his most famous and faithfull Sufferings, his most elaborate, learned, and divine Writings, and for his indefatigable and most fruitfull Services, many-fold wayes, both for this Church and State too, can never be sufficiently honoured, embraced, and beloved by all true-hearted Christians over this whole kingdome; yet (I say) how hath this most incompa- rable and precious Gentleman, this most Eminent Saint and Servant of the Lord and famous Patriot of his Country, been lately and liberally traduced, and most grossely abused by, almost, all our most unkinde and ungratefull Dissenting brethren of the Congrega- tionall Church-way; But most especially (and more lately, since



keeping this Reserve, to alter and retract what ever should be discovered to be taken up by you out of a misunderstanding of the rule. This being the avowed profession of your five grand-Apologists, to the whole world, in print: yet, a principle so inconsistent with sound faith and truth of Religion (of which, you so much vaunt) as that it suits with none but such an one whom the Apostle (James 1.6.7.8.) long since, ye know reprehended and characterized, (the true character, indeed, me thinks, of our Independent Brethren) viz. *A double minded man, unstable in all his ways, wavering, like a wave of the sea, driven about with the winds, and tossed.* Which, he closeth up with this dreadful determination. *Let not that man think he shall receive any thing of the Lord.* And if such Scepticks (as you profess your selves by this Apostles determination) cannot so much as think to receive any thing of the Lord; with what faces and consciences can ye think to obtrude your Independent-ways and fancies upon us, as the infallable Oracles, nay, Scepter, and Government of God and Christ, which your selves, infallibly believe not to be such, and take up only for the present, with a Reserve of altering, and not binding your very selves thereto, for the future? For Gods sake, my Brethren, take heed what ye do herein: For does not the Apostle, 2 Tim. 3.1,2.) prophesie, *That in the last dayes, perilous times shall come; for men shall be lovers of themselves, covetous, boasters, proud, heady, high-minded, having a forme of godlinesse, but denying the power thereof. Ever learning, but never able to come to the knowledge of the Truth.* Yea such as will not endure sound doctrine, but after their own lusts will heap to themselves teachers, having itching eares, turning away their ears from the truth, and will be turned unto fables and fictions, new-lights and revelations. And are not your thus pretended New-lights, the very persons, thus, delineated, by your own confessions and practises too, even Murmurers, Complainers, desirous to walk after your own lusts, and having mens persons in admiration for advantage. Yea, take heed (I say) ye be not found to be those Clouds without water carried about with Winds, and those Wandering-Stars which the Apostle Jude speaks of, which know not When or Where, immutably, to fix your faith and judgements? Whereas, our Presbyterians, and all other true Believers are alwayes (1 Cor. 15.58. Phil. 1.27. & Chap. 4.1, &c.) *Stedfast, unmoveable, standing fast in the Lord, in one spirit and in one mind, striving together for the faith of the Gospell, and not tossed*



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since.

since my foresaid Letter was published ) by the fore-mentioned Master *John Goodwin* ( as in all his former insulting and usavory peeces; so above all ) in that last and worst most scandalous Pamphlet of his, Entituled *Calumny arraigned and Cast*, a most flashy and false work ( as I can easily prove ) and a most undirect, unjust, and unreasonable taske undertaken by him, in taking upon him to be both *Judge* and *Party*, in his own cause. For, who can expect any other but a totall conviction and tyrannicall censure from a *profest Adversary* against his *Antagonist* ? But, if any impartiall and judicious Reader will but enquire for, and read over, seriously this Mr. *John Goodwins Letter* to Mr. *Thomas Goodwin*, then in *Holland* ( not long since printed and published by Mr. *Belamy* in *Cornhill*, in *London* ) he shall then see to his deep admiration what a fit man Mr. *John Goodwin* ( so tainted with *Socinianisme* ( if not *Arminianisme* ) with most dangerous Errors in *Saving-faith*; sometime a *Presbyterian*, and sometime an *Independent* ) is to sit a *Judge*, to *arraigne*, *cast*, and *condemne*, such a most constantly, orthodox, pious, and painfull servant to God and his country, as Mr. *Prynne* ? And then, certainly, the Reader must needs also break forth ( with me ) into an extasie of astonishment and admiration at the strange boldnesse and unblushing audacity of Mr. *John Goodwin*, so to censure others, considering his own guilt, *Levity*, and *instability* of minde, and grosse errors in judgement; his said *vanity* and *unconstancy* of minde and *promptitude* to error, being lately further enformed to me by very reverend and credible testimony; thus, That even when he was a Student in the *University of Cambridge*, his *Contemporaries* there with him, have reported and witnessed of him, that he ever loved to maintain and defend strange Opinions among them : Whereby it seems the man ( *Salamander-like* ) cannot live out of the fire of contention & offensive opinions; notwithstanding that one of his bewitched pet ( if not, malepert ) *Profelytes*, most absurdly, superciliously, & falsely called him, *A great Master in Israel*, and the best of men. How, also, hath that for-said Noble *Berean*, I mean Mr. *Prynne*, been yet more lately and more boldly abused, by a most scurrillous, proud, and illiterate poor Pamphlet, under the notion or title of Mr. *John Lilborns Letter* to Mr. *William Prynne* ? Wherein, how frothily, fondly, and falsely, hath he abused, not only precious Mr. *Prynne*, whose Books ( in point of a Disputant ) he is most unworthy to bear after Mr. *Prynne*; wilfully mis-reciting and mis-reporting his Positions

point-blank against his words and writings, which, surely, he either read not or understood not; as if Mr. *Prynne* concurred with the Jesuites in a point wherein he is most opposite unto them; complaining against the Parliaments just restraint against libellous printing, even in his libellous Letter, in print, before ever it came to Mr. *Prynne* in writing: But also reviling the whole *Reverend Assembly* of most learned and pious *Divines*, terming them (most rudely and unmannerly) at least three or four times, no better then *Black-Cotes*, and, *The profest enemies of Christ himself*: yea, and most audaciously daring to censure the most honourable *Parliament itself*, both *Lords* and *Commons*, with dishonourable breach of their *Covenant*? But it hath pleased the most righteous Judge of all men, in some measure, to meet with the evill of both these most ungratefull Sons of their Mother, the Church of God, in way of punishment (as I, for my part, cannot but give God the glory, & so account it, the one) by just *Shame*, in being deservedly thrust out of his Living, in *London*, by the *Parliament*; the other by *smart*, receiving a most dangerous wound in one of his eyes, by a Pike, immediately after his publishing of that most shallow and silly Letter. God give them both hearts to lay these things to heart, lest a worse thing follow.

Again, if *Pride*, (give me leave I pray you, without offence, still to use the language of *Canaan*, to speak in the dialect of Gods own *Holy Spirit*, which ye seem to delight in) if *Pride*, I say, and *Self-seeking*, or *Self-engagements* be not the *Spring* of all these your most unhappy and unholy contentions with us: what then, means your most unjust and causelesse *Schisme* and *separation* from us? and disdain to joyn and communicate in holy Ordinances and Assemblies with us, putting your selves into an unwarrantable way of gathering peculiar Churches, out of Churches, to your selves, falling, point-blank, upon that complaint and crimination of palpable *Schisme* (which, I admire ye see not, and ingenuously acknowledge not, even to this day; but most obstinately and wilfully, I fear, run on in) which the Apostle *Paul* himself so complains of, viz. That one is of *Paul*, another of *Apollo*, and another of *Cephas*: So ye, one is of Dr. *Holmeses*, another of Mr. *Goodwins*, and another of Mr. *Lockyers* Congregation; the very same thing, ye see, that the holy Apostle *Paul* himself, there complains of, even thus (as much as in you is) to divide and rend Christ himself a sunder. By this means also making and esteeming every particular

*Congregation*, yea, every particular *Saint* of yours (as ye call them) a true and entire *Church*, as Mr. D. one of your *Independent Brethren* holds, and publicly teaches; to every of whom equally, ye say, the *Keyes* belong, (and I think, by this rule, to the *Women-Saints*, as well as to the *Men-Saints*) not being subject to any *appeale* or *coercive-power*, other then your own; no, nor to admit of any counsell or advice from other *Congregations*, further then ye please to ask and entertain it your selves. Now, if such an uncough *Chaos*, and strange *Church-Way* (as ye call it) as this is, should be admitted over this *Whole Kingdome*: O, I tremble to think and conceive, what a *Humano capitis cervicem jungere equinam*, &c. as the Poet *Horace*; or what a *Monstrum horrendum, informe, ingens*, &c. as *Virgil*; this would prove in short time! And yet you our most improvident *Dissenting Brethren* call and count this only, *Christs Way*, and your *Selves only* (that run in it) of *Christs Kingdome*, excluding all other *Christians* (very many of whom, every way else as godly and gracious as your selves, and by some of your own learned & more moderate *Independents* (even your five *Apologists* themselves) held to be a true *Church* of *Christ*, and to have a true *Ministry*, yet shutting out, I say, all these *Christians* from *Christs kingdome*, even as the profest enemies thereof, and accounting them and their innocent babes and children, no better then *Ethnicks* and *Pleathens* whom ye will by no means admit into your *Assemblies* or *Congregations*, to partake of the precious *Ordinances* of life and salvation (*Baptisme* and the *Lords Supper*) if they will not joyn with you in your *Church-Way*, and take your unwarrantable and unscripturall *formall-Covenant*, invented by your selves: or, if they be poor, and cannot help to support (with their purses) your *Congregationall-Way*: I speak but what I know herein, and can produce my testimonies. Tell me, I beseech you, where (in all the whole Book of God, from *Genesis* to the *Revelations*) Separation from *Christian Brethren*, every way as good and godly as your selves, is either commended or commanded? And, if ye are not able (is, to this day, ye never were, nor ever can) to make this clear unto us: Then, how dare ye thus obstinately and causelessly separate from us into Corners and Chambers, and I know not what private and unwarrantable *Assemblies*. Whereas, we can most plentifully prove (yea, your own consciences cannot but check and chide you for) the contrary; namely, how clearly it is the will of God that *Christian Unity* and *Society* be maintained.

maintained. Witnesse, that especially (among many other full Texts of Scripture for it) of the Apostle, *Ephes. 4. 1, 2, 3, 4, &c. I therefore Paul the prisoner of the Lord, beseech yee that you walke worthy of the vocation, wherewith ye are called. With all lowlinesse and meeknesse, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love. Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. For, there is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling. One Lord, one Faith, one Baptisme, one God, one Father of all, who is above all, and through you all, and in you all.* Together, I say, with very many other most pregnant Scriptures to this purpose. How then O my Brethren (are ye do these things (except it be by that most destructive and pernicious plea for *Liberty of Conscience*, which ye so urge, and cry up, and cry out for, to do what ye list, in pretended matters of conscience; vehemently urging, that the *Civill-magistrate* hath no power to rule over any Christians conscience; which, though we easily grant in point of private believing, yet, we say and will justifie, he has power to regulate Christians consciences, in point of publick, pious, and peaceable practicall-cariage, both in life and doctrine, as is most clear from that pregnant & impregnable Scripture, *1 Tim. 2. 1, 2, 3.* Where the *Civill-magistrate* is acknowledged by the Apostle *Paul* himself, to be the principall instrument of God to regulate mens outward consciences (as I may call them) as well in all godlinesse as honesty, for the preservation of publick peace, unity and community one with another. Unlesse ye dare avouch that Christ did purchase a liberty of conscience for men to sinne, in any sort, which were most blasphemous so to say or think. How dare yethen I say (if ye will shew your selves the Sons and Daughters of Christian love, peace, and humility) do these things, even thus separate your selves from holy communion with us, and thus censoriously judge and think of us, who do (even at this time) enjoy (ever blessed be the Lords free mercy for it, and the Lord grant that this unholy-ingratitude and wanton-contention of yours, cut us not short of the farther and freer enjoyment of) the Word, most orthodoxly, plentifully, and profoundly preached, the Sacraments, in sweet measure (for the time) purely administred; and both Sacraments and Church-discipline in a most hopefull way (had we but thankfull hearts, godly wisdom, and pious patience to wait the Lords leisure (as it is our Christian duty) for the perfecting & completing thereof; and not, being poor-beggars, to be our own proud-

carvers) even ever since we most happily shook off the *Antichristian yoke* of our tyrannicall Prelates, to be blessedly reduced and settled in a *holy and unblended way*, free from *beggary-ceremonies* and *humane inventions*, as much as by *Christian prudence and piety*, (backed and strengthened by Gods rightest-rule, the *Scriptures*,) is possible to be attain'd unto, both for the *present* and *future* too.

Object.

But, probably it will be here objected; But Sir, would you have us to submit to such a *Church-government* or *Discipline* as we fear & are informed by our learned & pious Pastors, is as *Antichristian* & as tyrannicall (if not more) than the *Prelaticall* was: and, which Mr. John Goodwin saies, in his *Theomachia*, is a *bloody, unpeaceable, & persecuting way*, a way much *damping* and *deading* the flourishing improvements of the *gifts* and *graces* of the *Saints*.

Answer.

Whereunto I answer; First, that this is a most unjust & injurious slander maliciously cast upon the *Presbyterian-way*; witnesse, as I said before, the many thousands of most eminent *Saints* and rare *Christians*, famous in their severall generations, in *Geneva*, *Germany*, *Sweden*, *Hungary*, *Bohemia*, *Holland*, *France*, *Scotland* and now in *England*, both for most excellent and enlarged parts of learning and piety. Secondly, witnesse the most transcendent testimony of one of your own (now) prime *Independent Brethren* Mr. Lockyer by name, who (being at my house, upon just occasion thereunto afforded him by my selfe) professed most seriously unto me, that he having been in *Scotland*, and seen with his eyes, and taken speciall notice of the most exact practicall managing of their *Church-government* (and we all know that one eye-witnesse is better then ten eare-witnesse, or then a hundred speculative-conceits or imaginary *New-lights*) in all the particulars thereof; he, I say, professed most seriously unto me, that he was in conscience convinced and clearly perswaded that their *Presbyterian-way* was most *Apostolicall* and *Evangelicall*, even in these very tearms; and what higher *Encomium* could he possibly have given, in this behalf? Thirdly, and lastly, in further answer hereunto; I desire to ask any ingenuous *Dissenting Brother* or *Sister*, and if their conscience will but speak-out the plain truth herein, let them freely say, O, what would they and I have given, or done, lesse then ten years agoe, and so, upward, to have had the *Presbyterian Government*, as it then was, and now is, in *Scotland*, to have been established and set up among us, which, now, like *fools* and most ungratefull wantons, ye so contemne, condemne, and vilifie, to your great shame be it spoken?

Again,



Again, it may, peradventure, be here objected. But, are not the Ministers and many others of the *Independent-Way*, very eminent *Saints* and *Christians*, both for their *learning* and most *holy lives* and *unspotted conversation*, and therefore to be, as justly, *erudited*, and *believed* in what they have delivered to us, by *word* or *writing*, as any of yours to the contrary?

Object.  
3.

I answer, neither the *parts*, nor *piety* of men (though ever so outwardly pure and holy) are a *right rule* for truly wise Christians to walk by; but, contrary wise, very dangerous and deceivable: For (though from my heart, I here profess, as in the presence of God, the *Searcher of all hearts*, that I love and honour very many of the *Independent* or *Dissenting Brethren*, both for their *learning* and *holy lives*; yet give me leave, as ingenuously to confesse, with all, that I much fear them for their judgement and opinions sake, which I hold dangerous and destructive:) For, I say, as the Apostle Paul says, *Gal. 1.8.* Though any of you, yea or an *Angell* from Heaven preach any other *Gospel* or *Word*, then that which Christ and his Apostles, in the *written Word* hath delivered to us, let him be accursed. And my Brethren, 'tis not an unknown thing to Scholars, and any others, verily in *Ecclesiasticall histories*, that the most dangerous *Hereticks* and *first broachers* of *Hereticall* and *Schismaticall errors* and *opinions*, as *Pelagius*, *Arminius*, &c. Were men of marvelous *strict life*, and *outward holiness*. This rule, therefore I say, is no solid, safe or right rule for pious and prudent Christians to walk by, but the *written Word* of God only, and *clear* and *demonstrative deductions* and *necessary consequences* drawne thence, by comparing Scripture with Scripture, and thus trying the spirits whether they are of God or not, *1 John 4.1.* As the noble Bereans did. Now, all these premises seriously considered, wherein remains I pray, the mighty distance and difference between our most unkinde *Dissenting Brethren* and us, if not in the *Self-station* of their spirits, and in their *Self-seeking*, and private engagements, as hence we have great cause, more then to fear? For, they say, they desire but what we desire in the main, viz. *Pure Ordinances*, *Holy Assemblies*, and *Christ upon his Throne*, only they dissent and differ from us in some poor *punctilios*, some meer *surmises*, & bare pretence of what is not, or not yet proved to us from Gods Word, without which, they must pardon us, if we cannot believe them or be led by them; and herein, indeed, I confesse, they out-run us, and are before us, yea (and I fear and believe too) before God calls

Ans.  
2.



them. What then, means this Daggers-drawing at one another for poor circumstantial, things not absolutely necessary to salvation, and not justifiable by you from the Word? What, I wonder should be the reason of this unreasonable and irreligious contending to divide Christs seamlesse-Coat (wherein, indeed, our Dissenting Brethren shew themselves far worse then the Christ-cruisifying Souldiers) for the pretended fringe sake thereof? What's the cause hereof, I say, if it be not too much of that knowledge which puffeth up, and too little of that love which edifieth? Do ye think, my Brethren, that Men and Women given to strife, contentions, envyings, maliciousnesse, hypocrisie, lying, pride, covetousnesse, and such like, being fruits of the flesh, and sinnes exceeding full in Gods sight, (Col. 3. 5, 6, 7, 8 9. Tit. 3. 2, 3.) shall not be shut out of Heaven, as certainly, as those given to swearing, drunkennesse, murder, whoredome, and such like more open enormities? For shame then, my Brethren, forbear any longer to bear-up your meer opinions with such an unfriendly feud and irreconcilable rancour, strife, and contention. What, had ye rather that three famous and (lately) flourishing Kingdomes nay (Christs Kingdome it selfe, as much as in you is) should be ruinated & destroyed (for, a Kingdom or Church, divided within it self, sayes our blessed Saviour, cannot stand) than that your hitherto unproved opinions should by you be left and laid down? What, must ye be Casars or nothing? Had ye rather lose Peace and Truth too, then Victory? May not the mocking and revyling Royalists at Oxford, and the Malignant scoffers at London, yea, the Atheists and Papists too every where else, justly jeer us both, and in derision tell us, the King and his party know not what to grant us; since we, thus agree not among our selves, and know not what should be granted unto us? Nay, may not the King of Heaven, the Lord our God himself, deny us the mercies, which we hitherto have had great hopes he intends to bestow upon us; when we his children, like unthankfull (as I toucht before) and wrangling Wantons, fall out among our selves about a too-bold choice, fitted only to our own fancies, and will have this or that, or none at all? Must Beggars, I say, be their own carvers, both for the time and thing, or else they will frampally flye in their Brothers faces? O where is that pious pull-back of holy Abraham to Lot, Let not us fall out together, for, We are Brethren?

Object.

But here, I know, ye will object and tell us. But Christ, in the times of the Gospel, came not to send peace on the earth, but a sword, and

and to set men at variance, one against another : the father against his child, and the daughter against her mother, &c. *Mat. 10. 34.* I but let me answer, & therein ask you this question. What sword *Ans.* was this, with this blessed Prince of Peace brought into the world, in the times of the Gospel ? was it a sword of strife and contention, of variance, and vicious discord of one godly and Christian Brother against another ? of the godly father against his pious childe, of the truly religious daughter against her godly mother. No certainly, no such matter : but, of the godly father against the ungodly son, of truly virtuous children against obstinately irreligious & carnall parents : only in this sense (as I take it) that those of a mans own house should be his utter enemies. But, in the other sense, and to the other sort of godly Brethren, and truly pious Christians among themselves, even his Disciples and Saints, 'tis, I believe, and ought to be far otherwise : O, here, sayes our Saviour, *Peace, I leave you, my peace I give unto you, John 14. 27.* This, indeed, was the great and everlasting Legacy, which Christ before his death bequeathed to his children, & set the mark of *Love* upon them to be known to his Disciples. And therefore in this respect, let me advise you, my Brethren, to take great heed, lest by your unjust jarres, ye come to bear the number and nature of those to whom our Saviour pronounces a Woe, for offending any of his innocent and peaceable little-ones of the *Presbyterian-party*, his undoubted beloved ones ; for though (as Christ sayes) offences may, and must, or will come, *Math. 18. 7.* yet take heed ye be not those (as, I fear, ye are) by whom these offences do come. For, believe it, my Brethren, ye give a too great cause to set a mark upon you (*Rom. 6. 17.*) for raising and causing such unjust divisions and offences among us, & to wish had all kept in *New-England & Holland* still ; then thus to come among us, to molest our (at first) so hopefull and happy peace and communion, as ye have done, ever since ye came over to us. Only, herein, we may and must see the Hand of God sorely upon us, in raising you up, who we hoped would and should have been a mighty help unto us) to help to whip us for our former unworthy walking, and to be no small means to keep off the enjoyment of so sweet and pure ordinances, longer then we expected. But though thus ye will so inconsiderately, and indeed, so unchristianly retain your ungrounded opinions in your selves ; yet will ye (at least) endeavour with us, to maintain the grounds of public peace and Christian-unity and unanimity of spirit against the

*Common Adversary*; but thus discover your *impatient nakedness* for the scoffing *Chams* of the Kingdome to deride and detest us both, and all, I say, by your *unkinde* and *causelesse quarrels* with us? truly, *my Brethren*, if thus, ye wil *unbendingly* persist to prefer your own wils before *Gods Will* and *Way*; which is, *godly love & communion*, not *unwarrantable Wrangling & confusion*; then take heed I beseech you, lest ye too *justly* fall into the compasse and capacity of the generation of *those men*; who (as *Solomon* sayes, *Prov. 30. 12.*) are *pure in their own eyes*, and yet are not *washed from their filthinesse*. And who (as the *Lord himself* sayes by the *Prophet, Esay 2. 5.*) *Walk in a Way that is not good, even after their own thoughts*, who say (unto their *Brethren*) *stand by your selves*, come not near unto us, for we are *bolier* than ye. Truly, *my Brethren*, if these *Scriptures* be not exceeding nearly, yea, most *punctually* and *properly* applicable to you; to what end is your so *wilfull* and *obstinate separation* from us, to your own so pretended pure *Congregationall waies* and *Church Assemblies*, not admitting any other of your *Christian Brethren* to joyn with you, (nor you, by any means, willing to joyn or continue with them) but, as I said before, counting them [mark this] and their children, as *unholy Heathens*, hereby, saying thus much, in effect, *Stand by your selves*, for we are *bolier* than ye? Be not, I pray, displeased at the words, for they are *Gods own words*, not mine; nor with the *comparison* or *resemblance*, for ye easily see how peculiarly applicable it is to you, not unto us; for, we desire most cordially your *incorporation* and *communion* with us, and it behoves you (as I toucht before, who have *first* made the breach, and most *unkindly*, and, as we conceive, most *unjustly*, separated and departed from us) with all *Christian humility*, and *godly self-deniall*, to return unto us, and so to repair and make-up the *sad* and *bad breach* ye have made between us. Which that it may be so, (that so we may with holy *David* in a heavenly *harmony* of hearts and voyces, sing out a loud and lovingly, Behold how good and joyfull a thing it is, *Brethren* to dwell together in Unity! It is and shall be the sincere and incessant prayer of

Your Christian Brother,  
J. V.

Imprimatur,

*Fa. Cranford.*

FINIS.

rd.

